



Chris Danou's Capitol Report

The 2015 Legislative Session Sees Few Accomplishments

It's hard to believe deer hunting and Thanksgiving are just around the corner. A few weeks after that brings Christmas and then it's the end of the year. I know there's still some time between now and the New Year, but it'll be here before we know it.

My colleagues and I were sworn into office for another two-year term this past January. As I think back over the past ten months, I struggle to see true legislative accomplishments. For the third session in a row, Republicans have had control of the Assembly and Senate, as well as the Governor's office. Sure, we've passed lots of bills in that time and many have been done in a bipartisan way. However, what's really troubling is the lack of legislative victories for our area and communities across Wisconsin this session. I believe this simply boils down to priorities and what's on the agenda.

We know there are things that truly need our attention and yet those things aren't part of the agenda for the majority party. We should be working on ways to fairly fund our public schools, create jobs, repair our aging infrastructure, protect our natural resources, encourage the next generation of farmers and provide affordable health care. Instead, we've seen an agenda that limits local control, slashes good government, brings more money into the political system and cronyism into civil service.

We had a chance the last ten months to make better decisions for the long-term. However, we had a Governor who was putting higher office before the work to be done here in Wisconsin. He was then absent during a critical time because his short-lived presidential campaign took priority and the majority party kicked the can down the road. In their efforts to help the Governor and their own party, they've done nothing to help our state move forward. While we sat back and put politics over people, we've watched other states make long-term decisions that allow them to move ahead with funding public education, investing in a reliable and safe infrastructure, creating jobs and providing health care.

One tangible result I see when I go back and forth between Madison and my home in Trempealeau is the newly enacted 70 mph speed limit. By increasing the speed limit from 65 mph to 70 mph, I can get to and from Madison in about 10-15 fewer minutes. I'm not complaining about less time in the car but I do think it says a lot about our Governor and the Republican majority in Madison. We're ten months into a legislative session and an increased speed limit is about all they can show for their efforts.

We need to get back on track here in Wisconsin. We live in a time when things happen quicker than ever before and we need to start addressing the things that will make our state better for the next generation. The longer we wait to fairly fund public education, create jobs, fix our roads and bridges, and provide health care, the further back we fall in comparison to other Midwestern states. We need to get things back on the agenda that make a real and positive difference that keep us moving forward.

